

PROBLEMS, CONCERNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

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The management plan needs to address current problems and concerns about the management and maintenance of Pennsylvania Avenue NHS and its relationship to the city; to take advantage of opportunities to improve amenities for visitors, residents, workers, and commuters; and to articulate specific desired conditions and future management actions that will ensure that the site's purposes continue to be met and its significance preserved and communicated to the public. Recognizing that changes have occurred since the 1974 PADC *Pennsylvania Avenue Plan* was adopted, a process is needed to update management strategies to ensure that problems are addressed collaboratively and that the avenue's special streetscape is unified and maintained. Current planning visions need to be merged with existing objectives, and ways to activate the avenue through commercial activities, public use,

and a variety of specific events programming need to be developed. Also, NPS has received requests from the National Gallery of Art (NGA) and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) for transfers of jurisdiction that need to be addressed within the framework of a cohesive vision for the NHS.

Certain actions may require congressional authorization or revision of federal or park regulations, and a process to identify these actions is proposed.

SITEWIDE ISSUES

The 1974 *Pennsylvania Avenue Plan*

Problems and Concerns — The 1974 PADC *Pennsylvania Avenue Plan* is now nearly 40 years old. While many of the plan's goals and objectives remain valid, it is especially important as the next round of redevelopment is beginning along the avenue to consider short- and long-term refinements that would further help achieve the original objectives to make Pennsylvania Avenue an attractive and pleasant place for residents and visitors alike.

Challenge — Better ways are needed for NPS, GSA, and NCPC, as well as DC and other agencies with jurisdiction, to work together to achieve the objectives of the *Pennsylvania Avenue Plan* and to consider additional objectives that would further enhance the avenue and stimulate street life since Pennsylvania Avenue is an important location where city and federal precincts meet.

Opportunities — Updating, amending, or replacing the MOA to include DC and other agencies with jurisdiction along the avenue could help create a more collaborative atmosphere for providing a mixture of commercial and cultural activities. There is a sense of historic continuity and evolution along the avenue, as evidenced by the preservation of buildings representative of different eras and styles and the introduction of new buildings like the Newseum and the Canadian Embassy. This sense of continuity could be reinforced by ensuring that the best

contemporary planning and design concepts are continuously evaluated and used, not only for redevelopment but also for public access, furnishings, and amenities that meet today's needs. This would support the objective of making sure that Pennsylvania Avenue accommodates the various needs of all the people who use it — offering comfortable places to stroll, rest, sit and talk, eat and shop.

Management and Jurisdiction

Problems and Concerns — Pennsylvania Avenue NHS is managed by NPS; the 1996 MOA that was prepared after the disbanding of PADC defined roles for NPS, GSA, and NCPC. The purpose of the 1996 MOA that these agencies signed was (1) to ensure that future development and redevelopment of the Pennsylvania Avenue area would comply with the 1974 PADC *Pennsylvania Avenue Plan*, and (2) to detail procedures for amending the plan. DC, which manages the roadway, is not a party to the 1996 MOA. Different missions and responsibilities make it difficult to achieve a vibrant urban streetscape. As a result, there may be confusion related to jurisdiction and permitting, and management has not been as effective as it could be.

The area managed as Pennsylvania Avenue NHS differs from the area targeted for redevelopment by PADC (see the Jurisdictional Maintenance Boundaries and Easements plan map in the *NPS 2014 Management Plan*), as does the historic district nominated in 2007 to the National Register of Historic Places (see the Historic Districts plan map in the “Cultural Resources” background section).

NCPC prepared the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* in 2001. The plan identifies sites along Pennsylvania Avenue for additional commemoration, such as Freedom Plaza and the triangular intersection at Pennsylvania Avenue, Constitution Avenue, and 3rd Street NW. Future commemoration on federal lands is guided by the U.S. Commemorative Works Act, while the DC Commemorative Works Act applies to city property.

Portions of the NHS consist of easement areas. Some easements allow public use as envisioned by the PADC and carried on by NPS.

The PADC transfer legislation splits the jurisdiction of roadways and sidewalks between DC and NPS, with DC having jurisdiction of Pennsylvania Avenue and other roadways from curb to curb, and NPS having jurisdiction of sidewalks (40 USC 6702(c) and (d)). These two entities have different use and permit standards and requirements, which make it less easy to achieve the goal of a vibrant urban streetscape envisioned in the 1974 PADC *Pennsylvania Avenue Plan*. DC allows vendors on the streets during events, as allowed by legislation (40 USC 6702(c)(4)); however, they are not allowed on the sidewalks because NPS regulations do not allow commercial vendors, temporary displays, or the sale of art and crafts in park areas.

Challenges — Better ways to manage Pennsylvania Avenue NHS are needed to provide a vibrant urban park environment with lively and enriching visitor experiences. Agreement is needed on future commemoration.

Opportunities — To preserve and enhance the special character of Pennsylvania Avenue, ownership patterns and management structure can be simplified, and partnerships can be improved to revitalize this urban corridor.

There is an opportunity to fulfill the goals of the 2001 *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* and activate additional spaces along the avenue.

Cultural Resources

Problems and Concerns — Statues and park areas commemorate historic figures, events, and plans.

The views between the U.S. Capitol and the White House were lost in the 1840s when the Treasury Building was constructed, irretrievably blocking this sense of connection that L'Enfant had planned. The view of the U.S. Capitol dominates the avenue at its southeast end. Views from Pennsylvania Avenue to the north along 4th and 8th Streets, to the northeast along Indiana Avenue, and to the south along 6th and 10th Streets can be enhanced.

Historic plans, such as the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans, each contributed to the unique character of Pennsylvania Avenue. The reservations along the avenue defining the road and

the city layout date to L'Enfant's plan, while specific memorials or park areas were the result of the McMillan Plan and subsequent efforts.

Pershing Park and Freedom Plaza further changed the planned visual connection along Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol that L'Enfant envisioned.

Challenge — What is the best way to manage Pennsylvania Avenue in order to preserve commemorative sculptures and memorials, as well as the concepts of historic plans?

Opportunities — Through physical design changes to the avenue, there are opportunities to better interpret the original historic design intentions for the avenue, to enhance the character and setting, and to emphasize the visual connections between the White House and the U.S. Capitol that were a central part of historic plans.

In the 2007 evaluation of Pennsylvania Avenue it was determined that PADC features installed after 1974 were not eligible for NRHP listing. A cultural landscape inventory that is underway is reassessing the PADC work.

Demonstrations and Special Events

Problems and Concerns — Pennsylvania Avenue provides spectacular views of the U.S. Capitol, and it is the site of numerous special events and First Amendment demonstrations. Several areas are used for event staging and infrastructure.

Pennsylvania Avenue is the traditional location for Inaugural Parades. During inaugural events, seating, security checkpoints, and media stands are set up along the avenue, requiring that all signal and lights be removed from the roadway and sidewalks. Pennsylvania Avenue is also used for other parades, state funeral processions, and various official functions.

Challenge — Management and any future development must ensure that historic uses of Pennsylvania Avenue for Inaugural Parades, marches, and demonstrations will continue. Currently event users may need to get permits from NPS, DC, and the Metropolitan Police.

Opportunities — A primary, fundamental value of Pennsylvania Avenue will always be its role as a venue for First Amendment demonstrations, as well as its use as a ceremonial avenue in a manner consistent with the L'Enfant Plan. First Amendment demonstrations will continue to be permitted along Pennsylvania Avenue consistent with federal or DC regulations, as applicable.

Access and Circulation

Problems and Concerns — Because Pennsylvania Avenue is a major thoroughfare, all the issues associated with a heavily traveled city street (such as pedestrian safety and traffic flow) must be considered.

A citywide directional sign system has been developed jointly by the DowntownDC Business Improvement District (BID) and numerous partners, including NPS, but connections to and from Pennsylvania Avenue from the north and south are not consistently marked.

Multiple types of crosswalks (such as the half-road crossing approaches) and poorly defined pedestrian crossings may confuse pedestrians who are not familiar with the area.

In 2010 the city created two new bike lanes in the median of Pennsylvania Avenue, extending for 12 blocks from 3rd to 15th Streets. These are among the most traveled bike lanes in the city.

Metro stations at the Federal Triangle and the Archives–Navy Memorial–Penn Quarter have only single entries, which are less convenient for visitors. The NCPC *Monumental Core Framework Plan* recommends adding second entries.

Various forms of public transportation, including Metrobus, Metrorail, and premium services such as the Circulator buses, provide access to Pennsylvania Avenue. Through an agreement with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), bus shelters are provided along the avenue at locations identified in PADC plans. Shelters have been updated periodically, most recently about five years ago. However, transportation options exclusively for visitors are limited.

An interim NPS contract for interpretive visitor bus service is in place for the next two years with

stops on Pennsylvania Avenue at 6th and 14th Streets. The preferred alternative in the approved NPS *Visitor Transportation Study* would provide interpretive visitor transportation service to Pennsylvania Avenue, as well as the National Mall. The system would provide more frequent service to park destinations, links to transit from remote parking areas, improved connections to public transit, integrated ticketing with public transit, and user choice of interpretive programs.

Challenge — To what extent can public access and circulation be improved?

Opportunities — The concept of Complete Streets to describe streets that safely accommodate all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders, could easily be applied to Pennsylvania Avenue to convey its importance to downtown DC. The comfort and safety of the pedestrian environment, including crosswalks, could be improved, as well as the overall multimodal environment in order to address safety and access issues for bicycling. This plan also offers a chance to explore implementation of the preferred alternative in the NPS *Visitor Transportation Study* and how it relates to other proposals in the management plan. Proposals could also be explored to implement transportation proposals in the NCPC *Monumental Core Framework Plan*.

Urban Design Character / Special Street

Problems and Concerns — A special streetscape developed by PADC was approved for Pennsylvania Avenue, and it has created a sense of unity. Various agencies are installing perimeter security measures around certain government buildings, especially in the Federal Triangle. GSA has approved a perimeter security concept for the U.S. Department of Commerce Building (July 2013), which provides a design vocabulary for security projects.

Street trees, primarily willow oaks, define the avenue’s visual character and experience. However, tree health varies, and some tree grates are now too small for trees that have grown substantially bigger since installation. An inconsistent pattern of watering and landscape/tree conditions affects tree health.

Extremely wide and often shaded sidewalks provide a pleasant atmosphere. However, custom paving materials are hard to acquire, making repairs difficult.

Streetscape furnishings and paving are generally unified and contribute to the street character, which reflects the character of the 1970s and 1980s. There is also a need for additional features, such as seating, trash and recycling containers, and bins for dog waste collection.

Sidewalk cafés use a wide variety of street furnishings, such as tables and chairs, umbrellas, fencing, and flower containers. No guidelines exist for the aesthetic character of such commercial streetscape furnishings.

The existing *Streetscape Manual* defines light fixtures for the avenue. Existing lighting includes pedestrian lighting, wall and ground lighting, street and highway lighting, and building lighting. Historic, modern, and utilitarian fixtures are used along Pennsylvania Avenue.

FIGURE 1: PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE TREE GRATES



PADC had custom tree grates designed for the avenue; however, as the trees grew, the openings were not enlarged, resulting in the trees growing into the grates. In the worst cases trees have been girdled and died.

Many different styles of vending or free print media boxes are scattered along the avenue. Approved areas were identified during PADC planning.

Challenge — What elements need to be revised or updated to continue a unified urban design character for Pennsylvania Avenue and adapt to today's needs?

Opportunities — An assessment of PADC elements in a cultural landscape inventory will provide information needed to meet the challenge. This plan explores the opportunity to address various design concerns collaboratively. This includes consistent security measures within the NHS and the Federal Triangle for GSA, NGA, and NARA, as well as other facilities. Collaborative opportunities also exist to improve street tree conditions, to enhance the special street character and functionality, to encourage consistent paving that would unify the streetscape character, and to revisit the aesthetics of lighting character, color, and façade lighting. The collaborative efforts coming out of this plan could also encourage the development of clear guidance on a sustainable urban character and commercial streetscape furnishings.

Visitor Information, Education, and Enjoyment

Problems and Concerns— Orientation maps are provided inside Metro stations; however, comments to NPS reveal that visitors are not always aware that they are within Pennsylvania Avenue NHS and do not understand its civic, historic, and symbolic role in our nation.

Interpretive wayside panels developed by GSA, the DC Department of Transportation, and DC Cultural Tourism are located throughout the downtown area, including Pennsylvania Avenue as a part of the Federal Triangle Heritage Trail. The interpretive wayside panels along the avenue highlight a walking trail and provide historical information about the government buildings on the south side of the avenue. This implements a recommendation of the NCPC *Monumental Core Framework Plan*.

NPS walking tours are provided seasonally (average of two walks per week, with 5–10 people per walk) and by commercial and historic

groups. In accordance with Public Law 98-1, NPS also manages public tours of the Old Post Office tower (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily in winter, 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. in summer). Over the past five years the tower tours have averaged over 244,000 people annually.

The White House Visitor Center, which is managed by the NPS President's Park, is on Pennsylvania Avenue South and 15th Street, in the Malcolm Baldrige Hall of the Commerce Building. The center provides information about the presidency, the White House, and its residents. It is also the staging area for congressional tours of the White House.

Urban programs such as art and street fairs have been authorized through the NPS Permits Management Division. Street programs are permitted by the city. Street closures affect residents, businesses, and buildings fronting the avenue.

Recreational use of Segway® HTs is becoming more common; however, availability and relevant regulations are not always clear and consistent across different jurisdictions.

Skateboarding damages stonework, walls, steps, and sculpture in some areas and presents a persistent law enforcement and management challenge. Damaged areas include stone facing on memorials, benches, and other surfaces. Moreover, popular websites advertise the attractiveness of these areas for skateboarding, which indicates the large scope of this challenge.

Challenge — What kinds of opportunities or improvements in interpretation and education should be made so that park visitors and all Americans can understand the importance of Pennsylvania Avenue NHS, appreciate its integral role in the design of the city, and enjoy its amenities?

Opportunities — Convenient, easy-to-understand information can be better provided to help visitors understand and appreciate the historic importance of Pennsylvania Avenue NHS. Learning opportunities could be offered for all ages and abilities of an increasingly multicultural and technologically sophisticated society, with interactive interpretation to help publicize the civic role that Pennsylvania Avenue has for the nation. Tour opportunities at the Old Post Office tower, which offers a bird's-eye view of

Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol, could be more widely publicized, and interpretive programs at the White House Visitor Center could also more fully explain the historic link that Pennsylvania Avenue provides between the executive and legislative branches of our government, and how that link is exemplified during occasions such as Inaugural Parades.

Events and activities could be better coordinated and used to encourage a more community-oriented streetscape. Additional public art along Pennsylvania Avenue may help refurbish certain spaces, improve visual appeal, and/or provide increased opportunities for commemoration.

NPS regulations about designated Segway® routes could be better publicized. Skateboarding along the avenue could be addressed comprehensively in ways that both protect cultural resources, as well as acknowledge skateboarders as a user group that must be considered.

Visitor Facilities and Services

Problems and Concerns — Gardenesque and small-scale facilities have only been provided in Pershing Park and are no longer in use. No other NPS visitor facilities exist along the avenue, which detracts from visitor experiences and discourages extended visits to certain locations.

Sidewalk cafés have been permitted or authorized in agreements or easements, some initiated by the PADC. More cafés have been desired by businesses along the avenue.

NPS and GSA signed an agreement in 2013 to continue to manage the Old Post Office Tower.

Challenge — What facilities and services would make Pennsylvania Avenue more attractive to users? NPS regulations have limited commercial uses (such as sidewalk cafés) in some areas where they were not originally authorized.

Opportunities— More visitor facilities that are accessible, sustainable, and easy to maintain could be provided along the avenue. The policies and opportunities for sidewalk cafés could be clarified. With wireless service for computers expected to expand, there are opportunities to create a more WIFI-friendly environment that can be addressed collaboratively.

Health, Public Safety, and Security

Problems and Concerns — The *Streetscape Manual* defines the types of lighting for the avenue. Comments to NPS indicate that low levels of lighting along the avenue are not pedestrian friendly. This perception of an unsafe nighttime environment discourages a more active nighttime streetscape.

With the addition of delineated bike lanes in the median of Pennsylvania Avenue, some conflicts may arise between cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians. In accordance with NPS regulations, Segway® HTs are allowed on Pennsylvania Avenue sidewalks from 3rd to 15 Streets NW. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration safety issues concerning this busy and at times confusing multimodal environment.

Challenge — To what extent can security and public safety be balanced with making Pennsylvania Avenue a vibrant urban park environment?

Opportunities — To improve pedestrian safety and encourage active nighttime use of Pennsylvania Avenue, lighting could be increased and improved in certain locations.

Improved signage with respect to multimodal transportation along the avenue may help reduce potential conflicts between user groups and improve safety for all users.

This planning opportunity provides the chance to determine how best to deal with dog waste on the avenue in ways that respect its special character.

Operations

Problems and Concerns — Executive Order 13514 requires that federal agencies reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, increase the use of renewable energy sources, conserve water, reduce waste, support sustainable communities, and leverage federal purchasing power to promote environmentally responsible products and technologies. It requires federal agencies to reduce potable water consumption by 2% annually and by 26% by 2020. Other national and agency-specific guidance requires the consideration of sustainability issues as well. Currently, water features along

Pennsylvania Avenue, such as at Pershing Park and Freedom Plaza, use potable water and are in various stages of repair. Algae growth in some water features creates water quality issues, such as at Pershing Park. Generally, energy efficient bulbs are already in place in lighting fixtures along the avenue, although many need to be replaced. Trash containers, which were designed by PADC, need to be routinely maintained, as well as regularly emptied.

The project area for the Pennsylvania Avenue plan lies within the 100-year floodplain, making it susceptible to overbank flooding from the Potomac River. In addition, heavy rains can overwhelm the urban drainage system and cause flooding along the avenue. In June 2006 the Federal Triangle flooded following torrential rains, and in response the NCPC undertook a flood study in the District. As a result, collaborative work is underway to improve flood protection in the monumental core.

Commercial uses occur on sidewalks, and in most areas the sidewalks are very wide, so this use does not create problems. In a few areas, clear and safe pedestrian access is more constricted by café tables and other street furnishings.

Two concession contracts for food vending on Pennsylvania Avenue are managed by NPS. A new five-year contract was signed in 2012. Seasonal ice-skate rentals are no longer provided at Pershing Park. The space was small and constricted, and often the ice rink was not operational. Ice rink repairs would be expensive.

Historic leasing, commercial use authorities, and concession contracts can all be used by NPS to manage commercial activities. Rights to commercial activities through easements were initiated by PADC and transferred to NPS. These are complicated legal arrangements that are difficult for NPS to manage in an urban setting.

Utility connections, such as lighting, water, and power, may be located within adjacent buildings, complicating maintenance and security for federal facilities.

No consistent maintenance standards have been developed for Pennsylvania Avenue, resulting in confusion among NPS, its partners, and other commercial tenants along the avenue.

Existing partnerships include those with the DowntownDC Business Improvement District for safety and maintenance support, with the Naval Heritage Center to coordinate programs at the U.S. Navy Memorial, and with the John Marshall Friends Group to support rehabilitation of that park area.

Challenges — What is the most effective way to ensure that memorials and furnishings along the avenue are maintained to consistently high standards? How can NPS fully use partnerships and other relationships to help achieve objectives for Pennsylvania Avenue NHS?

Opportunities — By addressing sustainability along Pennsylvania Avenue, this plan could help NPS to satisfy Executive Order 13514, as well as NPS policy and program goals (such as Climate Friendly Parks), and to meet minimum LEED silver standards.

This plan offers the opportunity to further encourage collaboration among all those with jurisdiction along the avenue to jointly address issues and to develop collaborative responses to limit the potential for flooding primarily from urban drainage. This plan may also help encourage unencumbered pedestrian use of the sidewalks at critical locations.

The plan also offers opportunities to explore how to operate areas when utilities are in adjacent buildings, such as through maintenance agreements or jurisdictional transfers.

This plan additionally offers NPS an opportunity to further encourage commercial vendors along the avenue. This plan could identify opportunities to use historic leasing, nonprofit cooperative partners, commercial use authorities, and concession contracts to provide commercial activities and visitor services.

Coordinated maintenance standards would help create a unified, attractive streetscape that is appealing, accessible, and welcoming for all.

Partnerships are critical in helping NPS manage and improve Pennsylvania Avenue; therefore, under all alternatives considered in this plan, partnerships with outside organizations should be maintained and new partnerships encouraged.

SPECIFIC AREA ISSUES

Problems and opportunities at specific areas are described below. The common issues at these sites relate to how to improve site design, amenities, and maintenance so that these areas meet the needs of all users, including visitors, residents, local workers, and commuters.

George Meade Memorial (Meade Plaza) and Constitution Avenue Triangle

Problems and Concerns — This area (Reservation 553 in the original plat of the city) is a largely paved site, with few pedestrian amenities. Skateboarding has become an issue. The triangle in the middle of the Pennsylvania Avenue / Constitution Avenue / 3rd Street intersection has been identified as a site for a future national memorial. Safe pedestrian movements in the area are a concern. NGA has jurisdiction for the sidewalks south of the avenue and near the East Building; they were restored in 2013.

Opportunities — Pedestrian safety and circulation may be improved in this area, and current and future damage from skateboarding may be minimized.

John Marshall Park

Problems and Concerns — John Marshall Park is a multi-level area with a replica of a statue commemorating the longest serving Chief Justice of the United States (1801–35) and located there by public law. The area is used as staging for some special events, including Inaugural Parades. The park and its furnishings have deteriorated. Recently DC Cultural Tourism installed a wayside sign to provide information about the former Chief Justice.

The area is not well visited by the general public, but it is used by homeless individuals.

Opportunities — Rehabilitation offers opportunities to improve the park and provide additional education about the judiciary to increase visitor appreciation, activate the site, and improve safety.

FIGURE 2: VIEW TOWARD THE NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM



The view from the National Mall north along 4th Street through John Marshall Park to the National Building Museum is an important element of the L'Enfant Plan.

Mellon Fountain

Problems and Concerns — The Mellon Fountain, a small commemorative fountain at the intersection of 6th Street / Pennsylvania Avenue / Constitution Avenue, honors Andrew Mellon. The small, shady island triangle has some seating and grass. Shrubs screen some views of the U.S. Capitol and the fountain and have become areas where homeless people live.

I. M. Pei designed a triangular planting area with retaining walls that is on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue and north of the West Building; it was transferred to NGA in 2013.

Opportunities — Resource conditions, visual appeal, access, and circulation could all be improved at and near the site of the Mellon Fountain. NGA has requested the fountain be transferred to its jurisdiction.

Indiana Plaza

Problems and Concerns — Indiana Plaza is the setting for historic buildings and is the site of the Temperance Fountain and the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial. The plaza is east of 7th

FIGURE 3: VIEWS NORTH AND SOUTH THROUGH THE U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL



The view through the U.S. Navy Memorial is of the National Portrait Gallery to the north and the National Archives to the south, an important secondary view of the L'Enfant Plan.

Street, and skateboard damage is evident on walls and commemorative features.

The Temperance Fountain is in fair structural condition but no longer has running water because the waterline has been sealed and the trough has been removed.

Opportunities — Skateboarding damage to resources could be addressed, and aesthetic conditions and visitor experiences improved.

U.S. Navy Memorial

Problems and Concerns — The U.S. Navy Memorial is at 8th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. It has a large plaza with a map of the world, flagpoles, water features, sculptural reliefs, and the *Lone Sailor* statue. The area is used for concerts and programs by the adjacent Naval Heritage Center. This successful, well-used urban plaza

has an adjacent outdoor sidewalk café. Water sounds mask traffic noise. The memorial requires only small ongoing improvements.

The memorial provides a visual portal to the city, connects cultural destinations, and provides an important secondary north-south view between the National Archives and the National Portrait Gallery. There have been operational problems with the display fountains.

The memorial also includes the General Winfield Scott Hancock statue, which is less visible. There is a small dirt pathway and drainage problems. There are some complaints about skateboarding.

The Archives–Navy Memorial–Penn Quarter Metro station is at this location.

Opportunities — Minor issues could be resolved to improve drainage, erosion, and visitor experiences. There are also opportunities for commercial retail or restaurant establishments in the storefronts surrounding the plaza.

National Archives Frontage

Problems and Concerns — The north façade of the National Archives (Reservation 35) includes the research entry. The building is the terminus of views from Indiana Avenue, which is a tenet of the L'Enfant Plan. Trees in front of the building have not been replanted. Power and water utility connections for Pennsylvania Avenue are inside the building.

NPS manages the FDR Memorial Stone, which relates to the National Archives. There is one parking space, and pedestrian circulation is poor.

Opportunities — Addressing issues of jurisdiction, design, and management could improve visitor experiences and interpretation. NARA has requested this area be transferred to its jurisdiction.

Benjamin Franklin Plaza

Problems and Concerns — The Benjamin Franklin plaza is on the southeast corner of 12th and Pennsylvania Avenue, in front of the Old Post Office building. The front access to the Old Post Office is not welcoming, although the paving is unique. Lack of shade is a problem in the summer. The plaza has been transferred to GSA.

FIGURE 5: FREEDOM PLAZA



The large paved area illustrates L’Enfant’s plan for the city. It is frequently used by skateboarders, and few amenities are provided for casual visitors.

Opportunities — With the GSA selection of Trump Old Post Office, LLC, as the developer for a hotel and retail in this location, new approaches to improve visitor experiences will be created, including sidewalk cafés. The building will be more accessible as barriers to access are removed.

Freedom Plaza

Problems and Concerns — Freedom Plaza (Reservation 33) is a paved landscape designed to accommodate demonstrations and special events and to commemorate the L’Enfant Plan, which is illustrated with a map of the city in the paving, along with quotations about the nation’s capital. A statue of Revolutionary War hero Casimir Pulaski is northeast of the plaza.

The plaza is in poor condition. The fountain at 14th Street is time-consuming to maintain. Glare and heat contribute to user discomfort during

summer. Frequent skateboarding has damaged the walls and steps.

Freedom Plaza has been designated by NCPC as a future site for a nationally significant memorial. Because the plaza is just north of the Wilson Building, the seat of DC government, it is often used for local political demonstrations.

Opportunities — Given current conditions and opportunities already identified by NCPC, Freedom Plaza could be redesigned to be a more comfortable urban plaza and multi-use space that is more pedestrian friendly.

Pershing Park

Problems and Concerns — Pershing Park is an urban oasis / World War I memorial that was designed with a waterfall and pool; it also honors General John J. Pershing. The park is across from very popular sidewalk cafés to the north and from the White House Visitor Center to the south. The park and fountain need to be rehabilitated. Berms on the south and west sides hide views of the interior of the park from the street, creating safety and access concerns for park users. Some park furnishings, such as concrete tables, are not compatible with the character of other Pennsylvania Avenue street furnishings. A refreshment stand and underground restrooms (once accessible by elevator) are no longer operating. Seasonal ice skate rentals and commercial art shows were once provided, but no longer are.

Opportunities — Improvements and more activities could bring this park area to life.

FIGURE 4: PERSHING PARK



Pershing Park is largely hidden from views along Pennsylvania Avenue by berms and walls.